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## LORDINGE (*alias* "LODOWICK") BARRY

Of the Elizabethan playwright, Barry, little has been recorded. His name appears on the title-page of *Ram-Alley* (1611), and he is mentioned by Anthony à Wood, and in the manuscript of Coxeter. The two latter references, however, have been hitherto regarded as highly puzzling. For example, the *Dictionary of National Biography* begins its short notice of Barry thus: "(17th century), dramatist strangely miscalled by Anthony à Wood, and in the manuscript of Coxeter, Lord Barry"; Thomas Whincop, in his *List of Dramatic Authors* (1747), says: "A Gentleman of an ancient Family in Ireland, but not a Lord, as Mr. *Anthony Wood* is pleased to call him"; Isaac Reed, in *Biographia Dramatica* (1782), says: "What this Gentleman's rank in life was seems somewhat difficult to determine. The writers on dramatic subjects, viz., Langbaine, Jacob, Gildon, Whincop, etc., stiling him only Mr. Lodowick Barry; whereas Anth. Wood, in his *Athen. Oxon.* Vol. I, p. 629, calls him Lodowick Lord Barry,<sup>1</sup> which title Coxeter in his MS has also bestowed on him. This is, however, positively denied by Whincop, p. 91";<sup>2</sup> and in the Introduction to *Ram-Alley* in Dodsley's *Old Plays* (Reed, Vol. V, Collier, Vol. V, Hazlitt, Vol. X) we read: "Lodowick Barry is said to have been a gentleman of Irish birth, and Anthony Wood is pleased to compliment him with the title of Lord, which is very probably a mistake."

In this paper I shall attempt to explain the seemingly absurd references in Wood and in Coxeter; to restore to Barry his true Christian name ("Lordinge," not "Lodowick"); and, finally, to direct attention to an interesting chapter in his dramatic career.

At the outset let us observe the title-page of his play: "*Ram-Alley: Or Merrie-Trickes. A Comedy Diuers times here-to-fore acted. By the Children of the Kings Reuels. Written by Lo: Barrey. At London . . . . 1611.*" In subsequent editions of the play, 1636 and 1639, this title-page was not altered.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is not exactly true, for Wood did not use the word "Lodowick" at all.

<sup>2</sup> Repeated verbatim by Stephen Jones, *Biographia Dramatica*, 1812.

<sup>3</sup> See Greg, *A List of English Plays*. Lowndes mentions an edition of 1635, which

The author, it will be observed, is called "Lo: Barrey." Yet every modern writer on the drama confidently refers to him as "Lodowick" Barry. So far as I can discover, the first person to expand the abbreviation "Lo:" into "Lodowick" was Langbaine, in *The English Dramatick Poets* (1691). The accuracy of this expansion, however, may be suspected, for Langbaine could tell nothing of Barry save what might be gathered from the title-page: "An Author that liv'd in the middle of the Reign of King *James* the First: who writ a play call'd *Ram-Alley*." Now, the customary abbreviation for Lodowick was "Lod."; the abbreviation "Lo." is quite indefinite; and in view of the apparent ignorance of Langbaine, the expansion of the letters into "Lodowick" may be considered as open to reasonable doubt.

The play, it will be observed, was performed by the Children of the King's Revels. This troupe, which existed only from 1607 to 1609,<sup>1</sup> acted at the Whitefriars Playhouse. Fortunately we know something of their history; enough, I hope, to enable us to identify the author of *Ram-Alley*. In the *Transactions of the New Shakspeare Society*, 1887-92, Mr. James Greenstreet has printed an interesting chancery suit concerning the children and their owners. From these documents we discover that one of the prime movers in organizing and managing the troupe was "one Lordinge Barry"; and from his conduct we are led to believe that he was also, to a certain extent, experienced in dramatic affairs. Associated with him in the enterprise were Michael Drayton, the poet, John Mason, the author of *The Turke* (like *Ram-Alley*, acted by the Children, printed in 1610),<sup>2</sup> Martin Slater, who figures conspicuously in Henslowe's *Diary*, and several other "gentlemen, of London." The venture proved unfortunate, the troupe disbanded in 1609, and shortly after, 1609-11, the plays owned by the company were printed.<sup>3</sup>

There can be little doubt that Lordinge Barry, sharer and part manager of the Whitefriars Playhouse, was the "Lo: Barrey" of the sold at the Rhodes's sale for 2s.; but the date, 1635, was probably an error for 1636 or 1639.

<sup>1</sup> Probably from the autumn of 1607 to the spring of 1609.

<sup>2</sup> An edition of this play, with an Introduction and Notes by the present writer, is now in the hands of the printers.

<sup>3</sup> For a list of these see F. G. Fleay, *History of the Stage*, p. 188; and *Biog. Chron. Eng. Drama*, II, 329.

title-page of *Ram-Alley*, and the "Lord Barry" of Anthony à Wood and the manuscript of Coxeter. In the two latter cases, apparently, "Lord" was intended as an abbreviation for "Lordinge";<sup>1</sup> or, as in the case of many of the Elizabethan playwrights and actors, Barry may have been good-naturedly dubbed by his fellows with a nickname—"Lord" Barry. And the abbreviation on the title-page may be similarly explained, for "Lo." was used in the seventeenth century as an abbreviation for "Lord"; the *New English Dictionary* (*s.v.* "Lo.") quotes from the *True Declaration of Virginia* (1610): "That noble Gouvernour, the Lo. Laware."<sup>2</sup>

The legal documents to which I have referred throw considerable light on Barry in his relations to the drama. To indicate the nature of these relations I quote here the opening part of the suit, stripped somewhat of its legal verbiage:

George Androwes, of London, silkeweaver, [complains] That whereas one Lordinge Barry, about february, 1607, pretending to be lawefully possessed of one moitie of the late dissolved monastery called the Whitefriars, in ffeete streete, vnder a lease from the right honorable Robert, lord Buckhurst, vnto one Michaell Drayton and Thomas Woodford for the tearme of sixe yeares eight monthes and twentie dayes, for the yearely rent of fiftie pounds, The moitie of *which* lease by meane assignment from Thomas Woodford was lawefully settled in the said Lordinge Barry, togeather with the moitie of divers plaie books, apparrell and other furnitures vsed [by] the Children of the revells in settinge fourth playes; and the said Lordinge Barry, being desirous to ioyne others with him in the interest of the same, who might be contributorie to such future changes as should arrise in settinge fourth of playes there, and sharers in the gaine to be made thereof, did there vpon, by himself, and by the meanes of one Martyn Slaiter, cittizen and iron-monger of London, and other his confederates, sollicite and perswade your orator to take from the said Barry an assignement of a sixth parte of the premisses and profitts aforesaid, alleadginge the great benefitt that would redound vnto your orator by meanes thereof . . . your orator was most notably abused and drawne into a good opinion thereof, and did accepte of the said bargaine, and went through with Barry for the purchase of a sixth parte thereof, and accepted an assignement from the said Barry of a sixth parte of the said lease.

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered, too, that "lording" was a variant for "lord."

<sup>2</sup> Further examples may be found in reprints of early manuscripts. I quote from the Privy Council Register, Malone Society *Collections*, I, 378; "Lo: Arch B: pp of Cant. Lo: Trear. Lo: President. Lo: Steward. Lo: V: Wallingford. Lo: Carewe. Lo: Chichester."

For the subsequent history of this ill-starred theatrical venture I must refer the reader to Mr. Greenstreet's article. Perhaps the pecuniary distresses indicated by the suit led Barry into other fields of endeavor; at all events we do not again hear of him in connection with the drama.

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